

Dealing with Pyogenic Liver Abscess

Over the past 10 years, the Department of Medicine, HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine had received 80 cases of pyogenic liver abscess.

Pyogenic liver abscess is caused by the infection of bacteria and parasite. Bacteria were transmitted to the liver through hepatic portal vein, hepatic artery and bile duct while patients got parasites after drinking polluted water or eating raw food. Inflammation of human parts may also cause liver abscess through circulation system.

Its symptoms include diarrhea, swinging fever, vomit, abdominal pain and fatigue. Yellow discoloration of skin and tea-coloured urine may be present if their bile duct was infected. Patients with impaired immunity system and bacterial infection are more prone to develop liver abscess. Hence, elderly patients and patients with diabetes should take extra precaution.

In recent years, the wider use of antibiotics and the rising concern on public health helps to reduce the incidence of liver abscess. Yet, its mortality rate remains high as diagnosis is often delayed. Treatment consists of percutaneous drainage of the abscess and the use of antibiotics. Surgery should be considered if the abscess cannot be cured after medical treatment.